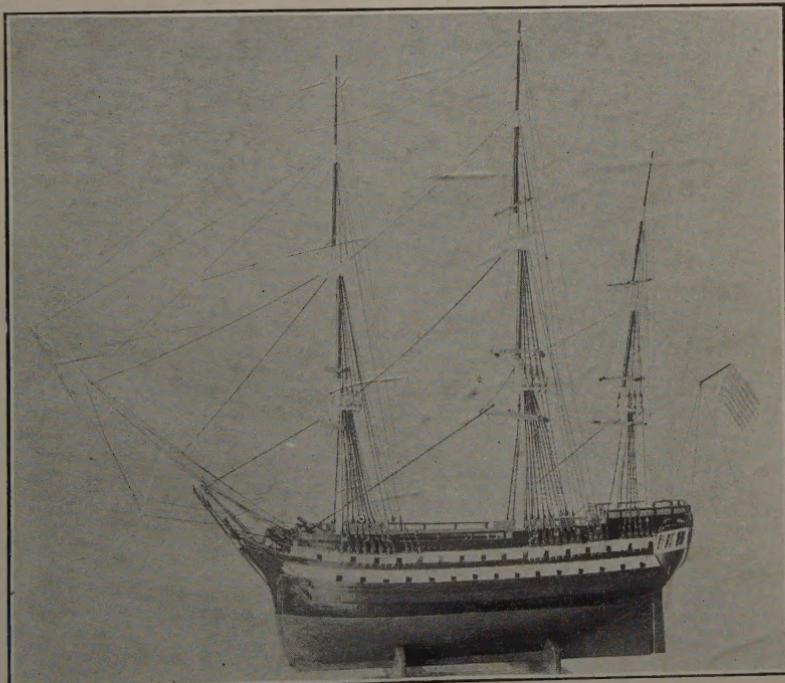


RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS

Vol. XIX

April 1, 1926

No. 2



Model of frigate Washington.

From the Society's Museum.

Issued Quarterly

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RHODE
HISTORICAL



ISLAND
SOCIETY

COLLECTIONS

Vol. XIX

April 1, 1926

No. 2

G. ALDER BLUMER, *President*
GEORGE T. SPICER, *Secretary*

GILBERT A. HARRINGTON, *Treasurer*
HOWARD M. CHAPIN, *Librarian*

The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or the opinions of contributors.

Life In Old Narragansett

BY MARY A. HARRIS

My earliest recollections date back to life on a farm, bought by my great, great grandfather, Henry Marchant, of the Babcocks, who originally bought it of the Pettaquamscott purchasers, in South Kingston. He went from Newport to South County, in 1774; after the Battle of Lexington. Being an ardent Son of Liberty and one of the foremost leaders against England, he bought this farm with the large, rambling old house upon it for his family because the British were about to occupy Newport.

My mother was brought up by her grandfather, his son, and so the generations never seemed far apart.

They were friends of the Hazards.

The customs were somewhat similar to those of "Old Narragansett."

I see the house which is now standing, facing the south:— two large front rooms, one either side of the front door. The little bedroom in back of the sitting-room, where the grandfather always kept the cordial for the guest to partake of when he said

goodbye. We as children did not know for years why the guest went quietly into that other room.

Then the large kitchen, a "lean-to" built the whole width of the house. It had four windows, facing the upland meadows, and woodland,—where grazed a large flock of meek-eyed sheep. The wool from the sheep commanded a good price, and was a considerable income for the home.

There were cows, a plenty, butter and cheese, was made for the home, rarely sold, as the family was large. The milk and cream were used lavishly. But the staple article was the "jonny-cake," made from freshly ground meal. With plenty of cream and butter, it was fit for a king.

The table was never stinted, and everything except flour (wheat), was raised on the farm. Beef, veal, pork (fresh and salt), fowls, corn, potatoes, onions and vegetables of all kinds.

There were always two or three horses, and always one that could go fast, and it was the pride of the grandfather to start at the last minute for the train and let that horse make time.

The windows had small panes, and there were inside shutters, hand made, put together with wooden pegs. The shutters slid and had to be pushed in front of the windows. There were no outside blinds. There were hand-wrought hinges on the doors. They are still there. The beams project overhead. Upstairs are the bedrooms: two large front rooms, and four smaller ones in back; and above them all, the big, old-fashioned attic, where we children loved to play. The rocking-horse, with real horse-hair mane and tail. The model of a ship, two and one-half feet long by two feet high, with square sails, and every equipment for sailing. The old spinning wheel had been put there too, and the smaller flax wheel. They had both been used in the olden time, by the fore-mothers, to spin, and the weaving had been done there too.

The herbs were still gathered in summer, and used for medicine when needed. They were hung in the garret—thyme, catnip, thoroughwort, sage and pennyroyal.

The big chimney bulged out in the attic, and was used for smoking the hams, and bacon, and beef. Some of the fire-places were still in use then, with the bellows, fender and andirons.



Henry Marchant House, West Kingston, R. I.

The bedsteads were piled high with "live goose" feather beds, and unless the night was warm, they were very comfortable. They were "four-posters," and were "corded."

And the company,—well, talk of hospitality; I believe that old house could tell wonderful tales of the friends entertained. Ten, twelve, rarely less than eight at table. Time meant nothing to them when the guests were there, two hours or more at the table, with story after story told, full of wit and wisdom. Many of them "South County" legends, of "old Liz Stetson," who let her girl grow up without a name, until she was old enough to name herself, of the man who was too lazy to work, and who was being taken to be buried alive, when a kind hearted neighbor offered to give him enough corn to last through the winter. He asked, "Is it shelled?" When answered in the negative, he replied, "Drive on, boys, drive on."

Then there was the walk over the farm, the fishing for eels, the hunting for rabbits and quail.

On Sunday everyone went to church. In the olden days, they went to the Congregational Church, on the Hill in Kingston.

The candles were dipped at home. There were several whale-oil lamps about the house, but not in use.

It was a neighborhood where the neighbors were neighborly; as Miss Hazard says: "The families were bound together by ties of blood, and marriage, and all joined in jollity, irrespective of church or creed."

South County is still fairly free from the foreign people who have flooded the other parts of our State.

The farms are fairly prosperous, the houses well kept up, and the people thrifty and well to do.

The spirit of neighborliness is still there, and the "clan spirit" which makes a South County neighbor stand up for his friend under all circumstances.

Get a real South County man to talk against another South County man, if you can, then tell me who he is.

Some Additional Notes on Rhode Island Pewterers

BY CHARLES A. CALDER

Following the trail in search of further examples of our Rhode Island Pewterers, has brought to light several interesting pieces not shown in the little monograph on the Rhode Island Pewterers, and it was thought well that a permanent record be made of them.

Although it seemed highly probable, from many signs, that Samuel Hamlin made 8" plates, no marked 8" plates by him had been seen until the two marked 8" plates here shown, were found and placed beside the truly elect.

The 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep platter of Gershom Jones, showing his earlier lion rampant mark, and the 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ " William Billings platters, have been added to the sizes already known to have been made by these workers.

Several pieces by David Melvill, of Newport, including a 14" platter, and some Hamlin, Jones, Billings and Calder pieces, all of Providence, have been found, but nothing new except the platters and plates mentioned.

The touch mark of all of above have been recorded.

Examples of the work of Samuel & Thomas and also Thomas Melvill, of Newport, have at last been discovered, a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " porringer and two 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " plates by Samuel & Thomas and a quart basin, a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " porringer and a 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " plate by Thomas Melvill. The pieces and their marks are here shown.

With the finding of the Melvill pieces the touch marks of all the known Rhode Island pewterers, save Benjamin Day and John Fryers, of Newport, and Josiah Keene, of Providence, are now recorded, and it was the aim in like manner, to record the articles made by them; it is, however, but a woefully meagre showing as yet.

Platters and plates of several sizes, basins, porringers and an occasional quart or pint pot are about all that seem to have come down to us, although we know by the advertisements, that many things in many sizes were made; thus Hamlin made basins and



7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " Plate — Thomas Melvill, 1796
Pint Porringer — Samuel and Thomas Melvill

Quart Basin — Thomas Melvill
Newport, R. I.

7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " Plate — Samuel and Thomas Melvill, 1793
Pint Porringer — Thomas Melvill

Thomas Melvill, Newport, R. I., 1796



Samuel and Thomas Melvill, Newport, R. I., 1793





Samuel Hamlin, Providence, R. I. Born 1746; died 1801
 $8\frac{1}{4}$ " Plates

(Hamlin & Jones, 1774-1781)



John Skinner, Boston, Mass.

porringers in "different sizes" and Jones speaks of quart and pint pots and 3 pint, quart and pint basins; the quart basin and $5\frac{1}{4}$ " and $4\frac{1}{2}$ " porringers of Hamlin are all that seem to have survived of these two lines, and neither basin or pots have come down from Jones and only his $5\frac{1}{2}$ " porringer; the same holds true of the Newport workers and the other Providence men, save for a two quart basin of Calder.

While sauntering along collecting Rhode Island pieces, I have occasionally strayed a bit from the strictly straight and narrow Rhode Island trail, finding it like most straying, highly entertaining, and gathering now and then a few examples of outside Yankees seldom seen. Thinking that they might prove interesting we have decided to show some of them with their marks.

The little "Semper Eadem" basin should be carefully scanned, for it is rarely found, likewise the basin bearing the Massachusetts seal (R. Austin), as also the Thomas Badger ditto, all of Boston Town and all exceedingly scarce; the Samuel Pierce basin, date and habitat as yet unknown, and the little R. Lee porringer, are also among those generally missing.

A John Skinner $14\frac{1}{2}$ " platter again of Boston, and again elusive and a John Will 8" plate, although a bit problematical as yet, are shown with their marks. These last plates are hammered, something rather exceptional in American pewter.



John Will



Gershom Jones, Providence, R. I. 1774-1809
(Hamlin & Jones, 1774-1781)

14 $\frac{3}{4}$ " Deep Plate
Lion Rampant — Mark

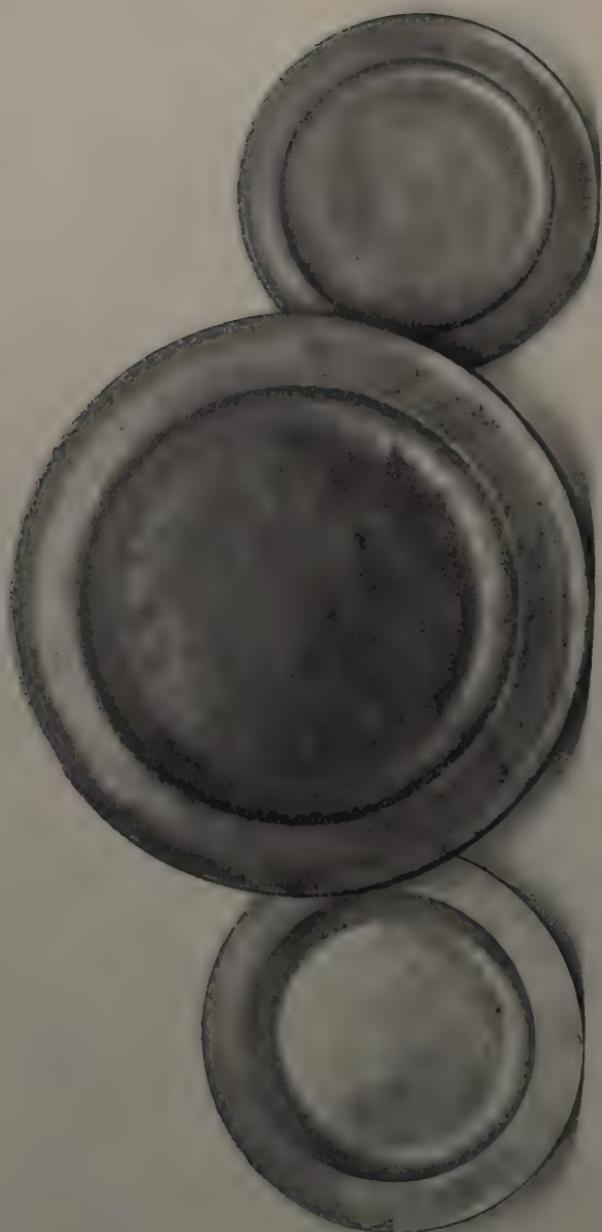
13 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Plate
Eagle Anchor — Mark



William Billings, Providence, R. I. 1791-1813
14½" and 13¼" Plates

John Will
8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " Plate

John Skinner, Boston, Mass.
8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " and 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Plates





Mass. Arms
R. Austin
Quart Basin

R. Lee
Porninger

Samuel Pierce
Quart Basin

Semper Eadem
Pint Basin

Thomas Badger
Quart Basin

The Removal of the County Seat from Tower Hill to Little Rest, 1752

WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER

(Concluded)

The rumor that this petition was to be presented evidently reached Tower Hill shortly after its inception, for a counter petition was prepared and presented at the same session¹⁸ of the Assembly. This latter document is not as calmly written and expressed as the one from Little Rest but shows unmistakable evidence of haste, heat and malice. It is termed "The Remonstrance and Petition of us, the Subscribers Inhabitants on & near Tower Hill" who have "apprehended that the Petition of Coⁿ Elisha Reynolds Major Latham Clarke and others for removing the Court House and Goal from Tower Hill to a place called Little Rest * * * is conceived in very Extravergat Terms Fraught with absurditiys and misrepresentations and the prayer there of unreasonable and Injurious * * * That it is absurd when they Endeavour to impose on the Belief of the Honoble assembly that the members of General Assembly and of the Several Courts of Justice when they there sett shall be maintained at the Private Expence of the Neighbouring Inhabitants and at the Same Time propose Three Taverns to be maintained at the Expence of Such members, that they misrepresent Facts when they would Insinuate that their farms are Better the Nesesarries of Life Easier obtained and Gentlemen Better entertained at Little Rest than at Tower Hill, the Contrary of which is so apparent that we Believe no persons Except the Subscribers of said Petition will have Effrontry enough to Contradict it. Your Petitioners would further observe that the place proposed by the Subscribers of S^d Petition for placing said Court House & Goal in is attended with several unhappy Circumstances. Great Part of the hill being a wett heavy Soil Supported with a hard Substance So near the Surface¹⁹ as to Render

¹⁸February, 1752.

¹⁹This condition still exists in certain parts of the village

the place for Great part of the year very Dirty and mirry and most of theire Cellars During that Season are filled with water and Great Part if not all the wells afford water of So Bad a Quality as to Render it very Loathsum to the Taste²⁰ & the Roads Leading to & from said place are of the most Rocky & miry Sort that can be well imagined."²¹ Furthermore to meet the "Spurious Pretence of publick Benifitt where with some of the Subscribers of Said Petition endeavour to cover their Sinerster Designs in proposing to Effect Said Building at their own Cost your Petitioners inform this Hon^{ble} assembly that Thomas Brown²² John Case Esq^{re}²³ Joseph Hull²⁴ Sam^l Willson²⁵ James Helme²⁶ and others will at their own Cost put the Cort house & Goal on Tower Hill in Good and Sufficent Repaire * * *" Having thus denied each and every allegation of Little Rest save that of the perilous condition of their Court House, the petitioners of Tower Hill rest their case with the prayer that "this Hon^{ble} assembly will grant" that conditions shall be allowed "to Continue the same there for the future and your Petitioners as in Duty Bound will Ever pray" that the County Seat shall remain on Tower Hill.

²⁰A malicious exaggeration unless conditions have altered.

²¹The road between Kingston and MacSparran Hills via Mooresfield still gives ample evidence of the poor condition of the roads. It is of further interest to note that, during a botndry dispute in 1818, William Willson Pollock, (son-in-law of the Rev. Joseph Torrey), testified that about 1788 he "remember'd Rocks being dug &c in the Highway" to build a wall. These rocks were dug at a spot probably opposite the present village church.

²²Thomas Brown probably was a son of William and Elizabeth Brown. He was born August 23, 1711. His house and lands were north of Tower Hill.

²³John Case was born about 1701 and died in 1770. He may have been a descendant of the Robert Case mentioned in Note 3. The Rev. Daniel Goodwin did not believe that he was of the family of William Case of Newport.

²⁴Presumably a descendant of John Hull (born 1652, died 1709) who had a son and four grandsons of that name.

²⁵Samuel Willson was a son of Jeremiah Willson and Ann Manoxon and was born March 23, 1723. His sister married the Rev. Joseph Torrey. The Jeremiah Willson house is shown on a plat of 1726 as situated on the east slope of Tower Hill and on the north side of the road leading to the river.

²⁶James Helme, usually known as Judge Helme, was born May 7, 1710, and died in 1777. See Note 29.

The Assembly thereupon sent notice of the above petitions to the Clerks of the several Towns in the County and town meetings were called to vote upon the question.²⁷ Little Rest was the successful contestant and the Assembly thereby enacted²⁸ that its petition was granted "Provided Col. Elisha Reynolds, Mr. Wm Potter and Major Latham Clarke give bonds in the sum of £20,000 for the performance of all the conditions mentioned in their petition."

Thus Little Rest won its struggle for the County Seat,²⁹ which it retained until the year 1900 when a new court house was built at West Kingston, two miles to the westward. This was the third court house on or near Little Rest Hill as the one built under the conditions contained the petition as granted above was replaced in 1776 by a second and larger building³⁰ which stands to-day and is now under the supervision of the Trustees of the Kingston Free Library and Reading Room.³¹

²⁷The reports on the vote on this question, sent by the several Town Clerks to the Assembly, are now in the State Archives in Providence.

²⁸May session 1752. Records of the Colony of Rhode Island, Bartlett, Vol. V, p. 349.

²⁹The removal was a great detriment to Tower Hill and was actually its death blow. To-day there is nothing to suggest the prosperous village of 1752, not a single house of that period being left. Many of its residents followed the court to Little Rest where they built. Among them was James Helme, son of Judge Helme, who built a large gambrel roof house on the land opposite the present Updike house. It was demolished in 1910. In his testimony referred to in Note 21, Pollock, who was by trade a carpenter, stated that in 1755 he worked on the Waite house and in 1757 on the Barker house, now the Kingston Inn. The Waite house referred to was later torn down and the present structure built on its site. Pollock moved from Tower Hill to Little Rest in 1787 and remained there until 1797. He "kept the Goal 1788". The first jail keeper was Nathaniel Helme.

³⁰The first court house at Little Rest, which stood just east of the present church, was in use for upward of twenty years. In 1773 the Assembly voted that a new court house be built. This was completed in 1776 and the old building was sold at auction to Silas Niles the following September (1777). The amount received was two hundred and sixty dollars.

³¹Pollock in the dispute mentioned in Notes 21 and 22 further testified that the land east of where the jail was then situated was, in 1754, "all open and used as a Race Ground". This is where this second court house now stands.

Notes

"The Narragansett Mortgage" is the title of a volume issued in December by the Society of Colonial Wars in Rhode Island. It consists of a collection of documents relating to the alien purchases of Indian lands in southern Rhode Island.

An Historical Sketch of St. Ann's Italian Parish, Providence, R. I., by the Very Reverend John F. Sullivan, D.D., and the Reverend Vincent F. Kienberger, O.P., was issued on the occasion of the silver jubilee of its pastor, the Right Reverend Anthony Bove.

The January 1926 Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society contains a paper by George B. Smith, entitled "Memories of the Long Ago, 1839-1925."

A genealogy of the descendants of Chad Brown appears in the January 1926 issue of the *N. E. H. & G. Register*.

The following persons have been elected to membership in the Society:

Dr. Lucius C. Kingman
Mr. Archibald C. Matteson
Mr. Benjamin P. Harris
Mrs. Charles D. Cook
Mr. Stephen O. Metcalf
Miss Margarethe L. Dwight
Mr. George E. Nerney
Mr. Nathan M. Wright
Mrs. E. T. H. Metcalf
Mr. John A. Tillinghast
Mrs. Frances Pomeroy Lippitt
Mrs. George H. Capron

Through the generosity of Mr. William Davis Miller a copy of Papworth's "British Armorials" has been added to the Society's library, where it will be of great use to persons interested in identifying coats of arms.

Treasurer's Report

Income Account for the Year 1925

RECEIPTS

Annual Dues	\$1,980 00
Dividends and Interest.....	4,354 70
Rent of Rooms.....	107 00
State Appropriation	1,500 00
Grounds and Building.....	118 64
	————— \$8,060 34

EXPENDITURES

Rubbish	\$11 50
Binding	290 10
Books	1,248 13
Electricity	34 20
Exhibitions and Lectures.....	167 24
Expense	180 32
Fuel	700 00
Gas	6 20
Janitorial	207 40
Newspapers	2 74
Publications	861 71
Salaries	3,499 92
Supplies	273 28
Telephone	54 66
Water	8 00
Franklin Lyceum Fund.....	92 85
	————— \$7,638 25
Excess of receipts over expenditures.....	422 09
	—————
	\$8,060 34

Respectfully submitted

G. A. HARRINGTON
Treasurer

January 12, 1926.

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

December 31, 1925

ASSETS

Grounds and Building.....	\$25,000 00
Investments :	
	<i>Bonds</i>
\$1,000.00, U. S. 2nd Liberty Loan, 4½'s.....	\$956 19
\$3,400.00, U. S. 4th Liberty Loan, 4½'s.....	2,976 81
\$4,000.00, Government of Dominion of Canada, 5's, 1952.....	4,003 91
\$5,000.00, New York Edison Co., 6½'s, 1941..	5,447 85
\$4,000.00, Cedar Rapids Mfg. & Power Co., 5's, 1953	3,228 88
\$3,000.00, Cleveland Elec. Illuminating Co., 5's, 1939	2,565 42
\$1,000.00, Commonwealth Edison Co., 5's, 1943	965 25
\$1,000.00, Denver Gas & Elec. Co., 5's, 1949...	950 00
\$1,000.00, Columbus Rwy. Power & Light Co., 5s, 1940	970 00
\$1,000.00, Western Electric Co., 5's, 1944.....	998 17
\$300.00, United Electric Railways Co., Prior Lien, 4's, 1946.....	231 27
\$3,000.00, Central Mfg. District.....	3,000 00
	<i>Stocks</i>
125 Shares, New York Central Railroad Co..	12,500 00
111 Shares, Pennsylvania Railroad Co.....	7,188 45
30 Shares, Lehigh Valley Railroad Co.....	2,112 50
6 Shares, Lehigh Valley Coal Sales Co....	241 85
40 Shares, Milwaukee Elec. Ry. & Light Co., Pfd.	3,900 00
55 Shares, American Telephone & Telegraph Co.	7,123 61
60 Shares, Providence Gas Company.....	5,005 68
30 Shares, Merchants National Bank, Prov..	1,800 00
45 Shares, Blackstone Canal National Bank	1,050 00
6 Shares, Narragansett Electric Lighting Co.	335 00
10 Shares, Union Tank Car, 7% Pfd.....	1,050 25
Mortgage, P. A. and H. A. Cory (W. R. Prescott)	2,975 00
Industrial Trust Company, Participation Account (Franklin Lyceum Memorial Fund)	734 52
Deposit, R. I. Hospital Trust Co., Principal..	\$6,695 92
Income ...	422 09
	7,118 01
	\$104,428 62

LIABILITIES

Equipment Account	\$25,000 00
Permanent Endowment Fund:	
Samuel M. Noyes.....	\$12,000 00
Henry J. Steere.....	10,000 00
James H. Bugbee.....	6,000 00
Charles H. Smith.....	5,000 00
Charles W. Parsons.....	4,000 00
William H. Potter.....	3,000 00
Esek A. Jillson.....	2,000 00
John Wilson Smith.....	1,000 00
William G. Weld.....	1,000 00
Charles C. Hoskins.....	1,000 00
Charles H. Atwood.....	1,000 00
	—————
	46,000 00
Publication Fund:	
Robert P. Brown.....	\$2,000 00
Ira B. Peck.....	1,000 00
William Gammell	1,000 00
Albert J. Jones.....	1,000 00
William Ely	1,000 00
Julia Bullock	500 00
Charles H. Smith.....	100 00
	—————
George L. Shepley Fund.....	6,600 00
Life Membership Fund.....	5,000 00
Franklin Lyceum Memorial Fund.....	5,000 00
Book Fund	734 52
Reserve Fund	3,012 41
Surplus	1,214 01
	—————
	11,867 68
	—————
	\$104,428 62

Respectfully submitted

G. A. HARRINGTON
Treasurer

January 12, 1926.

Rhode Island Signboards

BY HOWARD M. CHAPIN.

(Concluded)

Fishes and insects make but scant showing as sign-board emblems. The *Dolphin* at Philadelphia falls into this category for the English list classes sea mammals as fish, and in 1768 the sign of the *Fish and Frying Pan* hung at Providence before a dry-goods shop. The *Turtle*, a Providence sign of 1821, is a very unusual sign-board device. The *Beehive*, symbolic of business, made an appropriate sign, and we note the *Beehive*, Charlestown, N. H., 1760, the *Golden Beehive*, 1792, also called the *Arm and Beehive*, and the *Silver Beehive*, 1805, both at Providence, two *Beehive Taverns* at Philadelphia, and the *Crown and Beehive*.

The botanical group, flowers, trees and herbs, brings us to the puzzling *Locust Stump* which is mentioned so often in the columns of the *Newport Mercury*. It was certainly a well-known landmark, but whether it was painted on a sign-board, carved in relief, or an actual stump, perhaps gilded to serve as a sign, is a problem still awaiting solution. The *Orange Tree*, 1708, and the *Logwood Tree*, 1732, were both Boston tavern signs. The latter sign doubtless owes its origin to the profitable logwood trade that New England sea captains plied. It is worth noting that the *Locust Stump* and the *Logwood Tree* are American devices and are not listed among the European signs.

The *Bush* was for many years in England the trade sign of an inn where one could be cheerfully refreshed and it may have been so used in America. The *Green Bush* tavern at Barrington, R. I., is perhaps an outgrowth of this old custom. Mrs. Earle mentions a *Pine Tree* tavern at East Poultney, Vt., and the sign of the *Rabbit and Pine Trees* at Northfield, Mass. *The Great Trees* and the *Wheat Sheaf* were Boston signs.

A popular fruit sign was the *Bunch of Grapes*, which, used in 1712 at Boston as a tavern sign, may have carried with it a



Daggett Tavern, Slater Park, Pawtucket, R. I. This sign has been
restored.

Loaned by the Attleboro Chapter, D. A. R.



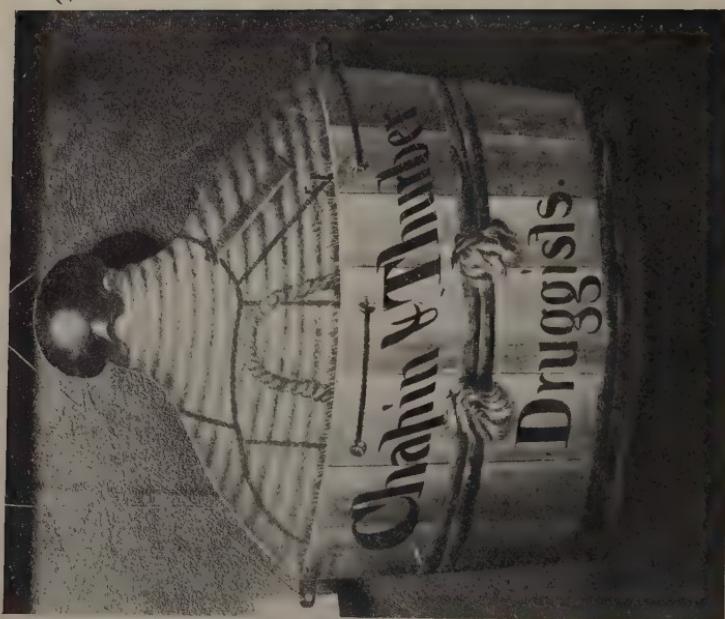
Bull Dog Tavern, Providence

From photograph in the Society's Library.

subtle suggestion of what was to be served, but as used at Newport in 1773 over a candle-maker's shop, and at Providence, 1766, over a dry-goods shop, its significance is doubtful, and it became clearly a house sign and not a trade sign. The Providence *Bunch of Grapes* is still in existence, as is also the business house, which still continues to use the symbol, although the original is in the Historical Society Museum. The Providence bunch was for a while associated with a lion as the sign of the *Bunch of Grapes and Lion*. The *Bunch of Grapes* served as a coffee house sign at Newport in 1764.

Naturally biblical and religious emblems were not popular designs for the sign-boards of the austere Puritans who settled New England, to whom such representations would seem to be sacrilegious and too strongly reminiscent of the Roman church. People, who went so far as to cut the cross out of their national flag, would scarcely be expected to tolerate the portraits or attributes of saints upon their sign-boards. The few crosses used on the early colonial signs were doubtless heraldic rather than religious in significance, and have been so considered. The likenesses of saints and martyrs, as might be expected, were conspicuously absent, although there was a *St. George* Tavern at Boston in the early days. This tavern was also called the *George* and seems to have been named in honor of George as England's national hero, rather than as a canonized saint. *Noah's Ark* was a Boston sign of 1656, which was doubtless considered historical rather than biblical by the literalists of those days. The *Gilt Bible* appropriately advertised a seventeenth century Salem bookshop, and the same idea is again repeated a century or more later in Rhode Island, where the sign of the *Bible and Anchor* hung over bookshops at Providence in 1798 and 1806, and at Newport in 1799. A nineteenth century Providence apothecary used the sign of the *Good Samaritan*, and like most apothecaries, probably lived up to this sign.

The dignities, trades and professions have contributed much to the variety of the sign-board. The *King's Head* signs are sometimes included in this group which is very comprehensive. The sign of the *Traveller*, Providence, 1767, the *Mariner*, Providence, 1794, the *Sailor*, also Providence, the *Alc-bearers*, the



Druggists' sign which hung at 73 Westminster Street, Providence, from 1843 to 1850 and later at 31 Westminster Street.

Loaned by Howard M. Chapin.



The sign of the Greyhound, Nathaniel Wheaton's shop on William Street (now North Main Street), Providence, in 1772.
From The Providence Gazette of November 7, 1772.

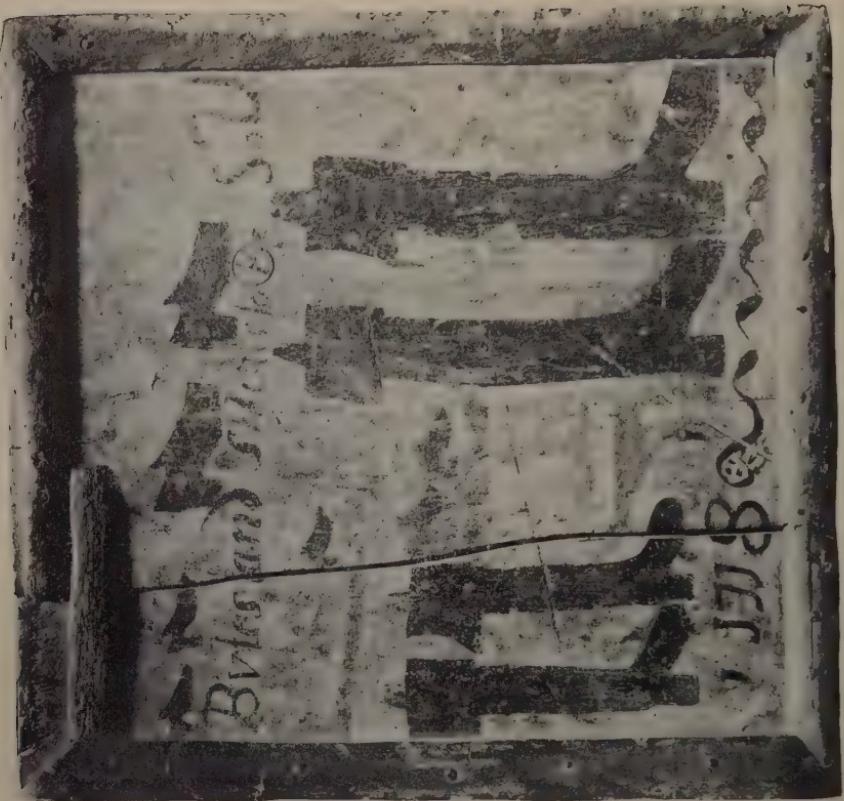
Sailor and woman, the *Three Jolly sailors*, the *Wounded Tar*, the *Boatswain and Call*, five Philadelphia signs, and the *Woodman and Axe* at Germantown are characteristic of this type of sign-board pictures. The *Soldier and Sailor*, often known as the *Patriotic Brothers*, appear in various surroundings, and are a phase of the spirit of '76.

The ship and its accessories were favorite devices. Boston had the *Ship Tavern*, 1666, also called *Noah's Ark*, and later the *Ship in Distress*. There was a *Ship* at Providence, another at Philadelphia, and the one in bas-relief at Saybrook, 1766, is now at the Connecticut Historical Society. The *Steamboat Hotel*, otherwise Hatches Tavern in North Attleboro, had an elaborate ship design.

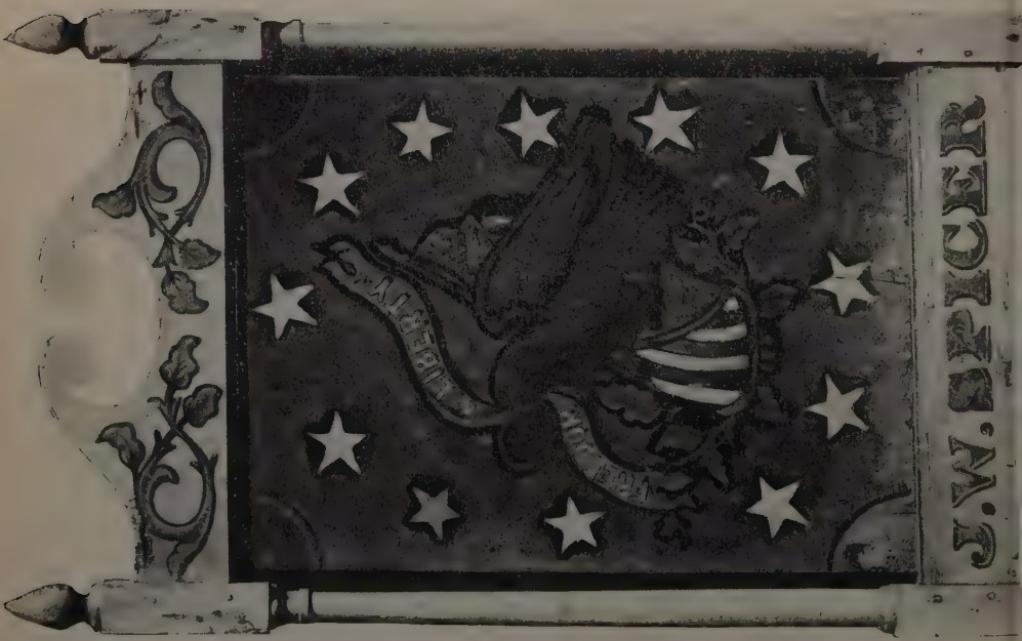
The *Brigantine* hung at Providence in 1766, the *New York Packet* and the *Ship and Plough* in 1795 and a *Passage boat* at Newport in 1771, while Philadelphia had the *Brig and Snow*, and the *Two Sloops*. Parts of ships also were utilized as for instance the *Cross Trees* and the *Top-Gallant* at Philadelphia, and the *trysail* at Newport. The *Anchor or Blue Anchor*, 1652, the *Lighthouse and Anchor*, 1763, both at Boston, and the various *Bible and Anchor* signs give proof of the appeal of this device.

Other signs featuring the objects connected with trades and professions were the *Smith's Anvil*, 1801, the *Saddle*, 1794, the *Golden Reel*, 1794, which was next door to the *Spinning Wheel*, the *Gold Watch*, the *Mortar*, the *Pestle and Mortar* and the various combinations of the mortar and other objects. A very unusual sign was that of the *Mathematical Instruments* at Newport in 1766. No English counterpart of this device is noted. *The four in hand stage* shown on the sign of Cady's Hotel at Gloucester, R. I., in 1810, as some of the other horse combination signs, may well belong to this group. The sign of the *Clock in Motion*, 1814, is another unusual one.

The house and table produced another group of devices, more prolific in England than in America. Still we find here the *Castle*, 1675, the *Punch Bowl*, 1789, and the *Golden Keys*, all at Boston, the *Gold Cup* at Salem and the *Pewter Platter* at Provi-



Old shop-sign, dated 1718, said to have hung above Waterman's Shoe-Shop
on North Main Street, Providence.
From the Society's Museum.



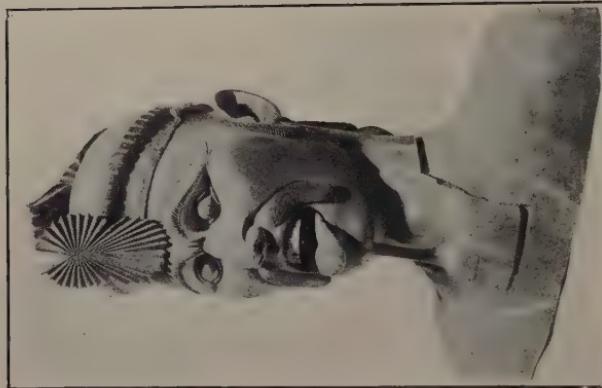
J.W. SEYCE

dence in 1784. The *Punch Bowl* on the Newton, N. H., sign was later, in 1798, changed into a *Tea-pot*.

Objects of dress and adornment add a few new designs. Beginning at the top with the sign of the *Hat* at Lancaster, Pa., Providence and Newport, R. I., the *Iron Hat*, 1798, the *Gold-laced Hat*, 1796, the *Hat and Crown*, 1764, the *Hat and Helmet*, and the *Bonnet*, for there was a wooden bonnet painted white, which until recently was preserved at Newport; we then come to the *Dresden Fan* at Newport in 1767, later called merely the *Fan*, followed by the *Blue Glove* and the sign of the *Stays*, both at Boston. In addition to the *Buck and Breeches* already noted, Newport had also the sign of the *Leather Breeches*, 1773, but this sign was rather a trade-sign than a distinctive sign, for it signified that its owner, Martha Lenby, made, mended and washed leather breeches.

Of footwear we find the sign of the *stocking*, 1796, the *Boot*, the *Mammoth Boot*, the *Little Boot*, the *Shoe and Boot*, and then finally the *Boot, Shoe and Slipper*. The boot, like the barber's pole and the three balls, continued in use even at the lowest ebb in sign-board history as the trade sign of an occasional shoemaker or shoe shop.

Geographical and topographical signs form a group by themselves, and were used extensively in England, but rather sparingly in America. The *Indian* was used at Greenfield, Mass., in 1774, at Concord, N. H., in 1794, and at Haverhill, N. H., while the *Indian Queen* was at Boston and Bladensburg, Md. The *Grand Turk* sign at Boston and the *Turk's Head* at Providence come under this grouping. The *Turk's Head* sign is said to have been originally the figure-head of Jacob Whitman's ship, the *Grand Turk*, and this theory is strengthened by the fact that the sign was carved in full relief in figure-head style. Whitman set this sign up over his shop as early as 1791, and the sign soon gave its name to the building and to the locality, just as the *Elephant and Castle* gave its name to a locality in London, and as the *Seven Stars* gave its name to a Boston Street. The *Turk's Head* was blown down in the Great Gale of 1815, and drifted off in the flood, but was recovered and later carried to Montgomery, Ala., where according to one account it was destroyed in a fire.



Fac-simile of Turks Head sign, Providence, R. I.
From the Society's Museum.

RATES OF TOLL.

For a Waggon Cart or ox Sledgs not exceeding 4 Cattles	10
A Team of more than 4 Cattle	15
A Sley with more than 1 Horse	12 $\frac{1}{2}$
A Sley with 1 Horse	6
A Coach Chariot or Phaeton	40
A Chaise Chair or Sulkey	20
A Horse and Waggon	6
A Person and Horse	5
Horses and Mules in droves per head	2
Neat Cattle in droves per head	4
Swine in droves for every fifteen	10
Farm animals less than fifteen each	1
Sheep and Stone Animals	2

Toll-sign, Harmony, R. I., 1818-1880.
From the Society's Museum.

Another more picturesque story is that it was rescued from the fire and sent to the Cherokee Indians, who thereafter venerated it as the image of a god. A fascimile reproduction of this interesting and impressive sign is preserved at the Rhode Island Historical Society. There was also an earlier *Turk's Head* sign at Providence, dating back to 1763. This is also said to have once graced a ship's prow as the figure-head of the ship *Sultan*, and later to have been set up on shore over the owner's shop.

Larwood and Hotten devote considerable space to humorous and comic signs and to those that contain puns and rebuses. America is, generally speaking, very weak on this sort of signs. Mrs. Alice Morse Earle, in her entertaining book on "Stage Coach and Tavern Days," from which we have already drawn, mentions a few humorous signs, but these seem to be merely copies of similar well-known ones of England. Five of these may be worth describing briefly. The sign-board bearing the picture of a headless woman and the title, the *Quiet Woman*, which is sometimes varied as the *Silent Woman* or the *Good Woman*, had a strong appeal, as did the *Struggling Man*, also called the *Man making his way through the World*. This shows the globe with a man's head, arms and legs protruding from it, as he struggles onward. The sign-board bearing the pictures of a tree, a bird, a ship and a mug of beer and the following verse:

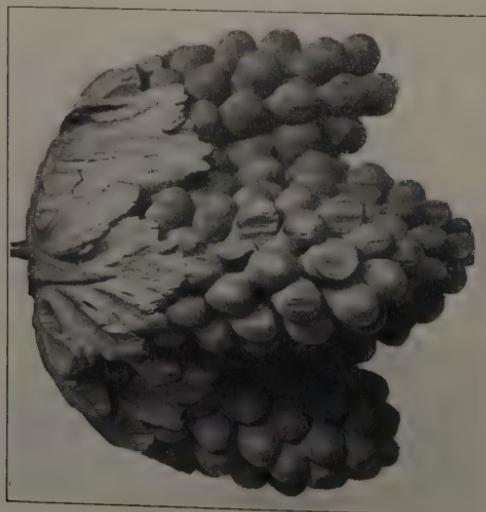
"This is the tree that never grew,
This is the bird that never flew,
This is the ship that never sailed,
This is the mug that never failed."

doubtless had good drawing power for it was used at Boston and Philadelphia as well as in England. Perhaps the most famous humorous sign is that of a man carrying on his shoulder a drunken woman, a monkey and a magpie, and having around his neck a chain and padlock marked "Wedlock." This sign, imported from England to the New World, is called *A Man Full of Trouble*, a paraphrase of the English title, *A Man loaded with Mischief and Matrimony*. The sign of the *Four Alls* depicts a king, a general, a minister and a laborer with the legends "I govern all," "I fight for all," "I pray for all," and

Sign that hung before the Kent County Jail, East Greenwich, R. I.
From the Society's Museum.



Sign of the Bunch of Grapes, which hung in
Providence, in 1766. *From the Society's Museum.*



"I pay for all." This sign, which hung at Philadelphia, was a slightly changed version of the old English sign in which the *Devil* was usually represented with the legend "I will have all," or words to that effect. The *Three Cranes at Charlestown*, 1734, is said to have been a play on words, the three birds (cranes) symbolizing the three cranes which in the vintry used to lift the barrels of wine.

The last group of signs is called the miscellaneous group, and is a sort of catch-all for what remains unclassified. Here we find the bell popular both in Old and in New England, there being a *Blue Bell* Tavern at Boston as early as 1663. The *Golden Ball* Inn at Providence was a very famous hostelry, where Madame Jumel, Lafayette, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison and James Russell Lowell stayed at various times. There was a *Golden Ball* at Boston, another at Newport, at Bristol and many other places. D. Hall's *Golden Ball* from some old tavern was shown in the recent exhibition, suspended from its ornamental ironwork. At Roxbury was a *Ball and Pen*, at Newport the *White Stone*, 1790, at Dedham the *Law Book*, and at Andover the *Horseshoe*, 1692. Astronomical objects fall into this group as the *Star*, 1764, at Boston and 1773 at Newport, the *Seven Stars*, perhaps intended for Charles' Wain, at Boston, 1771, and the *Sun*, of which name Boston boasts of four taverns between 1724 and 1785. There was a *Sun* at Salem, at Providence and at Newport. The *Carboy*, 1855, at Providence, is of this group, and, though late, is interesting in that it is painted upon tin instead of wood, and the name of the painter is known.

This opens up a very fascinating study that still seeks research workers—the subject of sign-board painters. Gilbert Stuart heads the list with several boards ascribed to him. Then follows Benjamin West, Bernard Wilton, both the Peales, Matthew Pratt, Louise Chapin, Halpin, Rice, Hicks, Woodside and Brown.

Nathaniel Ames, the celebrated almanac maker, ran the tavern at Dedham, and on account of unfortunate litigation, caused a sign to be painted in 1749 representing the judges of the court. The court sent a sheriff to remove the insult, and by good luck

and hard riding Ames got home first and removed the sign. The "Federal Convention of 1787 Inn" at Philadelphia had a pictorial sign showing the *Convention*, and the Union Hotel had a reproduction of the engraving of the *Declaration of Independence*. Picture signs, showing *Washington crossing the Delaware*, hung at Philadelphia and at Taylorsville, Pa. Pictorial signs and signs with verses mark the decline of the sign-board and show a lack of taste, being entirely out of keeping with the purity of the earlier productions. The charm and simplicity of the early sign-boards carries their crudeness of workmanship, and conversely the better workmanship of the later complicated pictorial boards serves to accentuate their inappropriateness.

Toll signs are really a special study by themselves, for while not as a rule artistic or ornamental, they carry a vast amount of interesting information, economic, social and historical, in the few lines of descriptive text and prices that they bear. Often, as is the case with other signs, the paint of the background has been worn away, leaving the letters standing in low relief.

A very remarkable sign is the *Handcuffed Man*, that formerly hung over the door of the Kent County Jail at East Greenwich, R. I. Exactly why a jail needed a trade sign is not quite clear, as there was evidently no necessity for the jail to attempt to popularize its service. Of course, some warden may have hoped that this sign might serve as a timely warning to some soul wandering from the straight and narrow path.

Additional material on our early signboards will be found in the Rhode Island Historical Society Publications, V:216 and VI:144, and in Book Notes I:13 and VIII:121.

